



## February 2017 Newsletter

### Committee members 2017

Mike Benson	Chairman
Deborah Cosgrove	
Ian Cowdy	Editor - Newsletter
Stephen Greenaway	Vice Chairman, Spray and swarm liaison. <i>Stephen@beenucs.co.uk</i>
Clive Harris	Treasurer
Kathy Hobson	Secretary, membership secretary. <i>kathy@waggledancehoney.co.uk</i>
Andy Jones	
Nicola Perrett	
John Woodstock	

### **Club logo clothing:**

Nicola Perrett holds a small stock of fleeces, polo and sweat shirts. If you would like to purchase one please contact her at [nicola.perrett@btinternet.com](mailto:nicola.perrett@btinternet.com)

### **Annual subscription fees:**

If you intend remaining a member of the Swindon association this year please renew your subs asap! You are not insured until Kathy Hobson receives the fee.

### **Club meetings:**

The next meeting will be on Thursday the 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb at 1930 hrs (Haydon Wick social club). Stephen Greenaway will be talking about the Asian hornet and demonstrating DIY traps, open forum if time permits.

### **Training:**

It is the Swindon Associations intention to continue running training courses this year, these include the following:

- 1 - Taster days
- 2 - Starting beekeeping
- 3 - BBKA basic assessment

If you are interested in any of the above please contact Kathy Hobson for 1) and 2) and Stephen Greenaway for 3) For the Basic assessment please remember that you must have been keeping bees for at least 12 months.

### **Workshops:**

In the past we have run workshops covering a wide range of subjects and activities, we need feedback from members letting us know whether to continue with these and if so what subjects you are interested in!

### **Swarm collection:**

If you are willing to collect swarms this year please contact Stephen Greenaway asap to ensure you are included on the list for 2017, please let him know what radius from your home you would be able to collect in and if you are already on the list please reconfirm your willingness to remain a swarm collector for this year!

**Mentoring:**

Do you want help and advice with beekeeping? There are members who would be willing to pass on their experience to new and novice beekeepers, please let Kathy Hobson know so you can be paired with a mentor.

**Unwanted hive occupants**

I have been finding in all my hive roofs and empty boxes clusters of an Ichneumon parasitic wasp, these use honey bees or their larva as hosts (not sure which). They can be as long as an inch including antennae. They don't have a common name but are listed as *Achaius oratorius* or similar species.



Attached to this month's newsletter is an article by Mick Carter who started keeping bees last year at the Honda site. We love this positive feedback especially when it shows that the training offered by the club is the best way to start!

**TWIGS AN ABUNDANCE OF EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE**

I would like to start by introducing myself.

My name is Mick Carter and Sandra Carter is my wife, we have 3 boys and between them 9 lovely grandchildren. I have worked at Honda UK for over 15 years at the South Marston plant and we have been keeping bees since 2015.

In August 2014 we attended a Taster day at TWIGS run by Kathy Hobson and assisted by Mike Benson.

The morning session was theory and the afternoon session was practical, where for the first time you get to handle the bees. We were hooked from that day on. Having attended that first session you become a member of the SDBKA automatically and this allows you to attend the club apiary at TWIGS whenever they are inspecting the hives.

On this note, we found that before we started to keep bees we attended the club hives on a Saturday morning and helped out regularly, this way gaining valuable knowledge from the club members that attend to the hives and much more experience in handling the bees. "You can read as much as you like but bees don't read books or follow rules" Mike Benson would say to me and there is no better knowledge than talking to fellow bee keepers who have been keeping bees for years and TWIGS is the place to find that knowledge and experience.

One Saturday we told Mike we were ready to order our bees and he asked "Where are you proposing to keep them?" "On my allotment" was the reply. He then said "it has to be very secure or you will get vandals and thieves" I laughed and said "surely nobody steals hives." "You would be surprised" came the reply and as the conversation carried on while we inspected some more hives. It was then when Mike realized that I worked for Honda and he suggested I ask them if we could keep the hives on their site.

The following spring our bees arrived. Two nucs of Buckfast bees and we set about making them happy at Honda but all the while still attending the club apiary and picking up lots of tips and useful information from the likes of Kathy Hobson, Mike Benson, Racheal Banyard, Ian Cowdy, Terry Knight and Stephen Greenway to name a few ( sorry to anybody I missed) who can be found helping at the Twigs apiary.

During one of the session our 8 year old granddaughter came along and helped out and we found it's a great way to introduce youngsters to the hives. We have all size suites at TWIGS including children which members can use before they buy their own.



We learnt to build Frames, spotted chalk brood and Varroa and had lots of guidance in preparing for our first winter and had some good conversation in our first couple of years helping out.

The TWIGS club apiary belongs to the members and is an asset and fountain of knowledge and experience, especially if you are just starting or haven't got any bees yet and anyone can learn more from other bee keepers.

Finally Honda has now started to help me and together we have made a short promotional video which can be found at:-

<http://www.facebook.com/hondauk/videos/10154906212177439>

Last but not least please let us know what you want from this newsletter?

Ian Cowdy [ian.cowdy@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.cowdy@btinternet.com)